

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 18, 23, 24, and 26-31 were rejected by the Office Action of December 18, 2006. By entry of this amendment, claims 1, 12, 24, and 27 have been amended, and claims 3, 4, 10, 11, 14, 20, 21, and 25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Consequently, claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 18, 23, 24, and 26-31 are pending in this application. No new matter has been added.

Objections / Informalities:

The Office Action noted that the inventors listed on the Oath/Declaration did not match the inventors listed on the Application Data Sheet. We are preparing to file a petition to correct inventorship, which should eliminate this discrepancy. This petition will be filed in due course.

The Office Action noted an informality in paragraph [0028] of the specification (referring to a described embodiment as the third embodiment instead of the fourth embodiment). The above amendment to the specification corrects this informality.

The Office Action also objected to the recitation in claims 1, 12, and 27 that the retention means “secures said locking member in said first position and said second position,” asserting that the stated claim element suggests that the locking member may be secured in two positions at the same time. To overcome this objection, claims 1, 12, and 27 have been amended to recite that the retention means “secures said locking member in either one of said first position and said second position.”

Allowable Subject Matter:

The Office Action has indicated that claim 25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Without conceding a lack of patentability of independent claim 12 (upon which claim 25 directly depends), claim 12 has been amended to include the recited features of claim 25, which should place claim 12 in condition for allowance. Claims 13, 18, 24, and 26 are patentable at least based on dependence on amended claim 12, and are therefore also in condition for allowance. Claim 25 has been canceled.

Rejections under 35 USC § 112:

The Office Action has rejected claim 24 for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter, indicating that the recited element of “three cut-out portions disposed approximately 90° apart from each other” was not disclosed in the application. To overcome this rejection, claim 24 has been amended to recite “first and second cut-out portions disposed approximately 90° apart from each other.”

Rejections under 35 USC § 102, 35 USC § 103(a):

Claims 1, 2, 23, and 27-29 were rejected as being anticipated by Modrey (U.S. Pat. No. 3,279,302). Claim 8 was rejected as being unpatentable over Modrey in view of Yang (U.S. Pat. No. 5,865,559), Homan (U.S. Pat. No. 6,193,260), or Edwards (U.S. Pat. No. 1,144,700). Claims 12, 13, and 26 were rejected as being anticipated by Collister (U.S. Pat. No. 5,507,611). Claim 18 was rejected as being unpatentable over Collister in view of Yang, Homan, or Edwards. Claims 27-31 were rejected as being obvious over Collister.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by, or obvious in view of, any of the above cited references, as features of the claim are not shown or suggested in the cited references. While the Office Action asserts that Modrey discloses a cylindrical end portion (straight portion of cam follower 4) coaxial with a shaft member (stem 6) in a first position, as recited in claim 1, Figure 2 of Modrey shows that the straight portion of the cam follower 4 does not have a common axis with the stem 6, as “coaxial” is commonly defined. None of the other above cited references disclose or suggest the use of a locking member having a cylindrical end portion that is coaxial with a shaft member in any position. As such, claim 1 is patentable over the cited references and is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 8 and 23 are also patentable over the cited references at least based on direct dependence on claim 1 and are in condition for allowance.

As described in the Allowable Subject Matter section above, amended claim 12 incorporates the recited features of claim 25, identified in the Office Action as allowable subject matter. As such, claim 12 is in condition for allowance. Claims 13, 18, 24, and 26 depend from claim 12 and are also in condition for allowance. As indicated above, claim 25 has been

canceled.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 27 is not anticipated by, or obvious in view of, any of the above cited references, as features of the claim are not shown or suggested in the cited references. The Office Action asserts that Modrey discloses a locking member (cam follower 4) extending perpendicularly from only one side of a shaft member (stem 6) in a second position and a retaining means (interaction of the cam follower 4, sleeve 2, and pin 5) that secures the locking member in the second position. However, when the cam follower 4 is secured in a lateral position, as shown in Figure 4, the cam follower 4 extends from two sides of the stem 6. When the cam follower 4 extends laterally from only one side of the stem 6, in the position shown in Figure 3, the cam follower 4 is not secured in this position. The Office Action relies on two different positions (the position shown in Figure 3 and the position shown in Figure 4) to disclose features recited in claim 27 as existing in a single “second position.” Modrey does not disclose or suggest an integrated pin and clip in which a locking member is secured and extends from one side of a shaft member in the same position, as recited in claim 27. Therefore, claim 27 is patentable over Modrey.

None of the other cited references disclose or suggest a locking member that can be positioned to extend laterally from only one side of a shaft member. In rejecting claim 27 as obvious over Collister, the Office Action asserts that claimed shapes are obvious “absent some showing of criticality,” and that “changes in size or shape without special functional significance are unpatentable.” However, the Office Action’s further assertion that “there would be times when having the locking member extend from only one side would obviously be beneficial” provides the very “criticality” or “special functional significance” that the Office Action suggests is lacking. Since there is no suggestion in the art of record that a locking member be secured in a lateral position extending from only one side of a shaft member, such an adaptation can only be made by applying hindsight based on Applicants’ own disclosure. Therefore, *prima facie* obviousness has not been established.

As such, claim 27 is patentable over the cited references and is in condition for allowance. Claims 28-31 are also patentable over the cited references at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 27 and are in condition for allowance.

In summary, independent claims 1, 12 and 27 are believed to be allowable. Further, the

remaining pending dependent claims are allowable at least based on direct or indirect dependence from the corresponding allowable independent claims.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Grover", is written over a horizontal line.

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Dated: February 20, 2007